



Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

2013 - 2016 Action Plan

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Directional Statement

ACAT represents a balanced voice for Campus Alberta. ACAT provides leadership to influence policy, highlight/promote best practices, and create a system for access that serves all learners.

Mandate

Established in 1974, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is an advisory agency accountable to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education and, in support of Campus Alberta, responsible for providing advice and guidance regarding post-secondary admission and transfer policy.

ACAT works with its stakeholders for the benefit of learners to ensure smooth transitions from secondary to post-secondary and post-secondary to post-secondary.

Vision

Alberta's post-secondary institutions work cooperatively to provide a transfer system that is responsive to the needs of learners in the matters of admissions, transfer credit, and recognition of prior learning.

Mission

The mission of ACAT is to be a catalyst for beneficial change and an advocate for learners in the areas of post-secondary admission and transfer throughout Campus Alberta. ACAT provides leadership and direction, as a cornerstone of Campus Alberta, in the improvement of educational opportunities for Alberta students through inter-institutional transfer. ACAT is committed to supporting and improving communication among Alberta post-secondary institutions and to promoting the advantages of a system of education, with all that this means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

Operating Principles

The Council endorses the following as basic to its purpose and activities:

- (a) Support Campus Alberta's core objectives by facilitating learners to successfully navigate the Transfer System and foster lifelong learning in the advanced education system.
- (b) Student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility from secondary to post-secondary and post-secondary to post-secondary in Alberta shall be optimized.
- (c) Negotiation of opportunities for student mobility shall be based on the recognition that while learning experiences may differ in a variety of ways, their substance may be virtually equivalent in terms of learning outcomes and rigour.

- (d) Effective academic advising, career counseling and optimum mobility require that the student have prior knowledge of at least the minimum transfer credit which can be awarded.
- (e) Individual institutions have the primary responsibility for instructional programs, even though responsibility for higher education is shared among various constituents. The responsibility of institutions includes program design and delivery, determination of academic prerequisites and student admission criteria, and certification of the academic achievement of students.
- (f) Institutions have the responsibility and the prerogative to investigate the total educational background of applicants seeking admission.
- (g) Post-secondary institutions are committed to developing and maintaining clearly stated policies and procedures for consideration of transfer credit and to applying them in a consistent manner.
- (h) After students are granted admission to an institution under a transfer arrangement, they shall be granted the same rights and privileges as students who began their studies at the institution.

Goals and Priority Initiatives

ACAT has identified five goals and associated priority initiatives that will guide the Council's and Secretariat's activities over the next three years. ACAT's focus on leadership, collaboration, research, technology, learner pathways and mobility will be reflected within each of the goals and their accompanying priority initiatives.

Goal 1

Articulation Committee Model

Articulation committees will continue to bring program heads, faculty and Alberta Education, in a given area of study, together to develop closer collegial relationships, exchange information and discuss issues related to admissions and transfer.

Initiatives:

- Articulation Sub-committee to review committee model, including process to identify areas for expansion and to ensure sustainability.
- Continue to expand the number of articulation committees in the Transfer System by two annually.
- Hold annual articulation committee chair meeting.
- Articulation sub-committee/Council engage articulation committees regarding key ACAT research questions and initiatives (e.g., learning outcomes).

Goal 2

Admissions Practices

Admissions Sub-committee will undertake initiatives reflecting ACAT's increased focus and communication on admissions-related issues and learner pathways from secondary to post-secondary.

Initiatives:

- Conduct survey of Transfer System member institutions to develop an overview and understanding of the current admission practices.
- Engage the Transfer System Contact Persons in discussion on issues related to admission practices at their annual fall meeting.
- Develop a repository/mechanism for sharing admissions information, data, and resources (e.g., high school transitions, dual credit, high school credentialing) with students and counselors and other stakeholders in the K-12 and post-secondary systems.
- Admissions sub-committee/Council engage stakeholders regarding key ACAT research questions and initiatives (e.g., promising practices).

Goal 3

Learning Outcomes

ACAT will continue its examination of the role of learning outcomes in the development and broadening of learner pathways through best practices and models for an outcome-based Transfer System.

Initiatives:

- Complete a review of a sample of existing by-program agreements through a comparison of learning outcomes, including identification of a common understanding of a working definition for learning outcomes.
- Develop a pilot block transfer agreement that is founded on identified learning outcomes and is informed by the lessons learned from the sample review of by-program agreements.
- Learner Pathways sub-committee/Council engage stakeholders regarding key ACAT research questions and initiatives (e.g., block transfer, ACAT/third party learning outcomes research).

Goal 4

Communication

ACAT will increase engagement and communication with and among Alberta's advanced learning system stakeholders to support learner pathways initiatives and student success.

Initiatives:

- Ensure ongoing, regular dialogue between ACAT Chair/Council and Enterprise and Advanced Education Senior Ministry officials.
- Contribute to key government initiatives (e.g., Post-secondary Learning Act review, Results Based Budgeting, funding model/tuition review).
- ACAT will seek out opportunities to enhance communication with and between system stakeholders, including engaging key stakeholders with ACAT's *Spotlight* communication.
- Facilitate provincial conversation about key research topics with ACAT, Campus Alberta Quality Council, and other stakeholders (e.g., student groups, ministries) to increase secondary and post-secondary dialogue.
- Provide students, Student Advisors and other key institution staff with enhanced Transfer Alberta technology tools, information, and training opportunities.
- Assess the viability of the Transfer Agreement Archival Retrieval System (TAARS) and the need for the development of a modernized transfer tool.

Goal 5

Governance

ACAT will review and align its governance documents and processes to align with the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act*, Government of Alberta priorities, and ACAT's new directional statement and priorities regarding leadership.

Initiatives:

- Revise Mandate and Roles; Code of Conduct; Principles, Policies and Procedures; Governance Recruitment and Structure documents, and Position Profiles.
- Revise the Alberta Transfer System Membership application and process, including key documents and policy.

